

# Reasons To Include Smokeless Tobacco

**Some facilities may think it would be easier to institute a policy that only applies to smoking, rather than creating one that includes smokeless tobacco. The reality is that establishing a comprehensive policy that includes all forms of tobacco is more equitable, easier to enforce, and has better health outcomes. Here are the reasons.**

## **There is no safe form of tobacco.**

The makers of smokeless tobacco want people to believe that their products are “safer” than cigarettes and can even be used as an aid in quitting smoking. The fact is that chewing tobacco and snuff contain over 28 cancer-causing agents. The most harmful carcinogens in smokeless tobacco are the tobacco-specific nitrosamines, which are formed during the growing, curing, fermenting, and aging of tobacco. These nitrosamines have been detected in some smokeless tobacco products at levels many times higher than levels of other types of nitrosamines that are allowed in foods, such as bacon and beer. Other cancer-causing substances in smokeless tobacco include *N*-nitrosamino acids, volatile *N*-nitrosamines, benzo(a)pyrene, volatile aldehydes, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, crotonaldehyde, hydrazine, arsenic, nickel, cadmium, benzopyrene, and polonium-210.<sup>1</sup>

Chew tobacco users increase their risk of oral cancer, which can include cancer of the lip, tongue, cheeks, gums, and the floor and roof of the mouth. Some of the other effects of using smokeless tobacco include addiction to nicotine, oral leukoplakia (white mouth lesions that can become cancerous), gum disease, and gum recession (when the gum pulls away from the teeth).<sup>1</sup>

## **Smokeless tobacco has very high levels of nicotine.**

All forms of tobacco contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. The amount of nicotine absorbed from a dip of moist snuff tobacco is 3 to 4 times the amount delivered by a cigarette. Even though nicotine is absorbed more slowly from chew tobacco than from cigarettes, chew tobacco users absorb more nicotine per dose and it stays in the bloodstream for a longer time.<sup>1</sup> This makes quitting very difficult.

## **Smokeless tobacco usage in Montana is a growing problem.**

Montana has one of the highest smokeless tobacco rates in the country. Fourteen percent of adult males in Montana use some form of smokeless tobacco.<sup>2</sup> Its use has increased among high school boys: 17 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> grade boys and 26 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> grade boys reported using chew tobacco in 2008.<sup>3</sup> Adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.<sup>4</sup> Because of the new packaging in pouches and the appealing flavors, more females are attracted to these products.

**The tobacco industry is increasing its marketing of smokeless tobacco.**

During 2005, the five largest tobacco manufacturers spent a new record of \$250 million on smokeless tobacco advertising and promotion.<sup>5</sup> This includes the distribution of free samples, advertising, sponsorship of rodeo and other family events, point-of-sale promotions, and other methods. Much of these marketing techniques reach children, their future customer base.

**All tobacco users, smokers and chewers, are treated equally.**

Policies that are fair and equitable will garner more support and compliance from employees and community members. If a policy applies only to smoking and doesn't restrict other tobacco use, it can be viewed by some as targeting or singling out people who smoke. The goal of a tobacco free hospital policy is to improve health by addressing tobacco use, the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S. This can best be accomplished when all forms of tobacco are included in the policy.

**Your policy won't encourage smokers to switch to smokeless tobacco.**

A policy that prohibits smoking and doesn't address all forms of tobacco can inadvertently encourage employees to use smokeless tobacco during their work hours. Also, some patients may consider using smokeless tobacco instead of the nicotine replacement therapy that is offered to them during their hospitalization.

In an effort to benefit from the expanding smoke free laws, smokeless tobacco companies have developed marketing campaigns that encourage smokers to use their products for "those times you can not smoke." An organization whose mission is to improve health does not want to promote the same message as an industry that is trying to gain new customers by encouraging people to substitute one deadly and highly addictive form of tobacco with another.

**Tobacco-laden sputum is eliminated from your property.**

The chemicals in snuff and chewing tobacco cause the user to have increased salivation. While some people swallow the juices, many people spit either into a container or directly onto the ground. This tobacco-laden sputum on your property is unsightly and can potentially spread diseases from exposure to this body fluid.

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>National Cancer Institute. Smokeless Tobacco and Cancer: Questions and Answers, available at: [www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless)

<sup>2</sup>Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, Montana Adult Tobacco Survey, 2008, available at: [tobaccofree.mt.gov](http://tobaccofree.mt.gov)

<sup>3</sup>Prevention Resource Center, 2008 Prevention Needs Assessment, available at: <http://www.prc.mt.gov/pna/2008.asp>

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheet, April 2007, available at: [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/Factsheets/smokeless\\_tobacco.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/Factsheets/smokeless_tobacco.htm)

<sup>5</sup>Federal Trade Commission. Smokeless Tobacco Report for 2002 – 2005 available at: [www.ftc.gov/reports/tobacco/02-05smokeless0623105.pdf](http://www.ftc.gov/reports/tobacco/02-05smokeless0623105.pdf)



**Tobacco Free Medical Campus Project**  
Clare Lemke, R.N., Project Coordinator  
406-222-8282 [clare.lemke@livingstonhealthcare.org](mailto:clare.lemke@livingstonhealthcare.org)  
Stacy Campbell, MA, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program  
406-444-3138 [stcampbell@mt.gov](mailto:stcampbell@mt.gov)

